



April 20, 2021

Dear Mercy students and families,

As Ms. Blakeslee noted in Monday's *Principal Notes*, *We seek to neither avoid nor enlarge the issues of the day, but to help our Mercy Girls explore, understand, and do what they can to work for a better world.* In light of the Chauvin trial and in recognition of the Critical Concerns of the Sister of Mercy—women, racism, violence, immigration, and the environment—we are offering our students a number of in-person and virtual opportunities for reflection and dialogue to process the stress, hurt, and trauma they might be experiencing. Those opportunities are available during and after the school day over the next few days as part of our care for girls who wish to access them.

Tomorrow, Wednesday, is a day when many of our seniors are on retreat and our sophomores are taking standardized testing. Therefore, we are offering two virtual options for reflection and discussion in the event students may want to gather. These will be held at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Links will be sent tomorrow, so students should be attentive to email if they would like to access this support.

Our first opportunity to gather together as a Mercy community for an all-school prayer service to pray for a world of justice, peace and mercy will be on Thursday morning at the beginning of school. A link will also be sent to all students so everyone can access this time of reflection and prayer.

We also draw to your attention our Norms for Civil Discourse, which are known to every Mercy Girl. These norms help our community have discussions around challenging issues.

Mercy High School's Norms for Civil Discourse:

Maintain engagement

Activate intentional listening skills

Ground arguments in mutual respect

Inquire further when confronted with misunderstandings or disagreements

Cultivate an open mind

We would also ask for special awareness around social media, which so often does not allow for nuance or compassion. When excited or upset, it is easy to turn to social media to express an opinion or emotion, only to regret it later on. We ask all Mercy Girls to use great care with their social media use in this time of high emotion.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Ms. Blakeslee or Ms. Marion.

We ask for God's healing touch for all who are victims of racism and violence, and we work towards a future where we are united as sisters and brothers in the Lord.

Together in Mercy,

Mary Beth Lennon '85
President

Jeanne A. Blakeslee
Principal

Mary Ella Franz Marion '76, P'09
Dean of Students